

March 9, 2009

Joint Committee on Environment

Legislative Office Building

Hartford, CT. 06106-1591

Re: HB 6555 An Act Concerning the Humane Treatment of Elephants

Dear Joint Committee on Environment:

I am writing to ask your support of the bill introduced by Representative Diana Urban to protect elephants in captivity, specifically those who are used for entertainment in shows and circuses. The bill would make it unlawful to engage in inhumane or abusive treatment toward elephants.

My name is Gay A. Bradshaw and I hold two doctorate degrees, one in ecology and the second in psychology. I am the founding director of The Kerulos Center (www.kerulos.org) and the International Association for Animal Trauma and Recovery (IAATR). My research focuses on the stress and trauma on animals and was responsible for the discovery of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in free-ranging elephants. This and other studies that I have conducted on wildlife trauma and recovery have been published nationally and internationally, the subjects of numerous documentaries and media including the New York Times, National Geographic, Stern, USA Today, and ABC 20/20. My research on elephant traumatology is the subject of a forthcoming book with Yale University Press, "Elephants on the Edge" (August 2009) and foundational for the new field of trans-species psychology.

The passage of this bill is critical and the time is well overdue. Scientific evidence demonstrating the comparability of elephants and humans in terms of emotions, sense of self, and vulnerability to psychological and physiological trauma is well-established and thereby compels commensurate ethics and law. The use of bullhooks and chains is cruel, inhumane, and dangerous to the mental and physical wellbeing of elephants, much as it would be for humans. I strongly urge you to support passage of this bill.